

## PWA Housing and the Julia C. Lathrop Homes

"Housing" is a broad assignment and to bring it within practical limits I have assumed the task of presenting "Low Cost Housing," or rather, "Housing for the Low-Income Group" as carried on by the Housing Division of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works under Secretary Ickes.

There are other important agencies in Washington handling housing. Rural Resettlement and Suburban Resettlement are at present under the Resettlement Division of the Department of Agriculture, and one of their projects, "Greendale," at Milwaukee, was ably presented to the Illinois Society some weeks ago by Harry Bentley.

The Federal Housing Administration, or FHA, through insuring loans, makes possible and encourages the initiating and financing of large scale housing projects by private capital. The Colonial Village at Alexandria, across the river from Washington, is a very interesting, well conceived, and most successful example in this group. Up to date, the high cost of construction, with the comparatively low rental scale, seems to have been an insurmountable barrier to such financing here in Chicago.

A need for the coordination of Federal housing agencies has been recognized and efforts are under way in Washington toward some such centralization. The various undertakings have passed through many vicissitudes in the last few years and met with much criticism, but if there had been no other result, the development of a "housing conscience" in this country would have made it all worth while.

Housing for the low-income group has been carried on for some years by the Housing Division of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, more familiarly known as PWA, at first along the plan of limited dividends, and later with direct government ownership and control, and it has had its share of vicissitudes. Planned originally as slum clearance, the difficulty of acquiring without the right to condemn, large tracts of land owned in numerous small parcels by many different owners, proved an almost insuperable obstacle, and the decision of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati in the Louisville case, that the United States Government does not have the right of eminent domain and condemnation of property for the ownership and erection of housing projects, brought about a revamping of the entire program. While this decision has never been argued for a final ruling before the Supreme Court of the United States, it undoubtedly has worked a great hardship upon the ideals of the Housing Division of PWA, at least as far as the accomplishment of true slum clearance.

Upwards of \$130,000,000 of contracts have been awarded by PWA for, roughly speaking, some sixty projects up to the present. In Chicago the program originally called for three large projects, one for the west side, with an appropriation of \$12,500,000; one for the south side, to cost \$7,500,000; and one for the north side with an appropriation of \$12,000,000. Each project was assigned to a group of ten individual architects or architectural firms,

and I shall trace from now on, the history and development of the north side project, with which I have been associated, since I believe it will serve very well as an illustration of what has happened all over the country.

This project, in common with all the rest, had one fundamental idea back of it, that is, slum clearance, and in addition the other basic aims of providing needed living quarters and making work for the building industry. The original site of 97 acres certainly called for clearance throughout its entire area. Honeycombed with many small streets and alleys, it is generally occupied by old frame habitations, three or more to one small lot, many with spaces between the side walls of not more than a foot and small rooms with windows opening on to the almost negligible so-called side yards. Many houses have no bathrooms, but practically all have a toilet of sorts and a kitchen sink.

Our first task was to lay out a site plan, and in this we aimed at the development of the area in super blocks, with large open protected play spaces, and had to consider which streets should remain as through arteries, what secondary streets to retain in order not to add too much in the way of paving and utilities to the overhead costs. Finally we evolved such a preliminary plan, had it approved by the Housing authorities, and then proceeded to make complete pencil working drawings. When some 800 sheets were all but finished, a telegram was received out of a clear sky ordering immediate cessation of all work. This was the result of the decision in the Louisville case. When one considers that in such a site as we had been working on there were nearly 800 separate parcels of land to be purchased, it is easy to understand that to acquire it without the power to condemn was an almost impossible task.

Work stopped on this first project early in July, 1935. The authorities in Washington then proceeded, throughout the country, to seek sites that were either under one ownership or had very few holders. The architects in our group felt themselves very fortunate in the favorable site selected for the new north side project. It is unusual to find such a large tract available so close in, and in an industrial neighborhood where there is a real need for housing for the lower income groups. Transportation is adequate, and there are public schools and playgrounds nearby.

This site is approximately three and a half miles north and two and a half miles west of the loop, and is divided into north and south sectors by Diversey Parkway. The north sector has Clybourn Avenue as the easterly boundary and the south sector is closed on the east by the Damen Avenue viaduct, while the North Branch of the Chicago River borders both sectors to the west and south. The complete area in the two sectors is approximately 36 acres. The appropriation including land and all other charges is \$6,000,000.

Our problem in this new site was entirely different from that in our first project, for there were no streets within



the two sectors, thus giving us a free hand for development. Keeping in mind the same super block idea, we were able to develop comparatively quickly a site plan with a minimum of new streets. The north sector has one new street, a continuation of North Leavitt, running in a south easterly direction to Diversey Parkway, and then along the river bank in the south sector, circling at the south end and returning as North Hoyne Avenue to Diversey Parkway.

Groups of buildings were planned along these new streets and also on Clybourn Avenue and Diversey Parkway. Our problem was somewhat simplified by the use of standard Government housing units, although we developed quite a few new types to fit our own conditions. We were further aided in that a definite number of housing units was specified by Washington, separated into row houses, flats, and apartments, with an approximate number for each group, and further divided into from two to five room units, the big majority being in three and four room arrangements.

The plan as finally worked out and approved by the Housing Division had 975 family units with 3,419 rooms, a large central heating plant located at the south end, an administration building, and sixty garages. When contracts were let, however, two groups of buildings containing fifty units and 165 rooms were omitted, also the garages. This leaves in the final count, 925 units and 3,254 rooms in what is now known as the Julia C. Lathrop Homes, with only 17% coverage for buildings.

In both of our projects we adopted early the general principle of mixing the row houses in with the larger apartment buildings. This mainly for two reasons: the social possibilities, and the pleasing architectural effect to be gained by grouping, somewhat informally, buildings of varying heights, from two to four stories. Furthermore, we varied groupings in different arrangements, and obtained more contrasts by use of brick in three shades.

We also believed that by the use of simple stone-trimmed entrances of several different designs, we could still further reduce the institutional appearance that might be the result of too much repetition. We remembered a talk given by Miss Catherine Bauer some two years ago, in which she made a statement to the effect that if people were given pleasant places in which to live, the other social and economic problems would solve themselves.

The physical side of preparing drawings for such a large project was in itself a problem. We employed up to 150 draftsmen in the preparation of about 500 sheets of drawings.

Plans were advertised in July of 1936 and figures received a month later. The project was let under two separate contracts, the north sector to Henry Ericsson Company, and the south sector to the U. S. Fireproofing Company. These contractors were given proceed orders on September 23, work to be completed within just one year from that date, or September of 1937.

Good progress has been made, a number of buildings are complete on the exterior and work on the interiors has been progressing at the same time. The general principles of design that we outlined for ourselves are evolving, some of the hoped for effects now becoming visible. The general grouping is hard to visualize without the roads and landscaping, but to those who are familiar with the general idea, the whole is taking shape.

Landscape plans call for a simple treatment with large grass areas and some paved playgrounds and courtyards. Only two varieties of trees are specified, the honey-locust and the hawthorne, with Engelmann creeper on the wall

surfaces. No shrubbery is used, since it is too likely to collect papers and trash in our windy city, and the maintenance costs are prohibitive. The whole scheme has been designed by the landscape architect, Jens Jensen, with the aim of simple beauty and minimum upkeep.

Questions frequently asked have to do with costs, rentals, and the type of tenants for whom these homes have been planned. Costs are not unduly high, considering the standards of construction demanded in buildings that are to be amortized over a period of sixty years, and where it is necessary to keep down the annual overhead charges so that rents may be fixed at a minimum figure.

Rents have not yet been determined, and will not be until total costs are settled. In order to give the tenants the benefit of wholesale rates on heat, gas, electric light, and refrigeration, a sum of approximately \$2.00 per month per room will have to be added to the rent, and it should be remembered that comparisons with ordinary rents are therefore bound to be misleading.

Over 3,500 applications have been received up to date for 925 units available. According to the George-Healey Act, no apartment may be rented to a family whose combined income is more than five times the sum of the yearly rental. Other qualifications, such as character, financial reputation, present living quarters, etc., will be carefully checked, and these provisions will automatically reduce the number of possible tenants.

From the point of view of the architects, the past two and a half years have been very much worth while, and the project has served to keep a large number of draftsmen at work. We have been confronted with new and interesting problems, and in a day when planning for large horizontal areas is predominant, the experience gained is invaluable.

The social aspects have added to the interest in the architectural job, and we hope that the result may prove a justification for the expenditure of time and money, and may not entirely disappoint those socially-minded men and women who have worked for years toward the building up of the "housing conscience" that has brought into being all of the Federal Housing program.

—Robert S. DeGolyer.

The difference between industry and handicraft is due far less to the different nature of the tools employed in each than to sub-division of labor in the one and undivided control by a single workman in the other. This compulsory restriction of personal initiative is the threatening cultural danger of the present-day form of industry.

The only remedy is a completely changed attitude towards work, which arises from the sensible realization of the fact that the development of technique has shown how a collective form of labor can lead humanity to greater total efficiency than the autocratic labor of the isolated individual. This does not detract from the power and importance of personal effort; on the contrary, it enhances its utility by giving it the possibility of taking its proper place in the work of the whole. This attitude no longer perceives in the machine merely an economic means for dispensing with as many manual workers as possible and of depriving them of their livelihood, nor yet a means of imitating handwork; but, rather, an instrument which is to relieve man of the most oppressive physical labor and serve to strengthen his hand so as to enable him to give form to his creative impulse.

—Walter Gropius.



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**Editor Monthly Bulletin**

ARTHUR WOLTERS DORF, 520 NORTH MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO

Illinois architects are advised to read thoughtfully the report by the Illinois Society of Architects' Legislative Committee, presented by Paul Gerhardt, Jr., Chairman, on another page of this issue, on "An Act to revise the law in relation to the regulation of the practice of structural engineering." This revision to permit "professional" engineers, whatever their bent or field, to do building, is considered by many who have studied the bill a nullification of the architects' license law.

Mechanical, heating, plumbing, air conditioning, electrical, mining, metallurgical and chemical engineers would be qualified under the act to plan and direct and be responsible for building operations without examination proving qualifications to design buildings. According to this, functional planning and safety in structure, to say nothing of aesthetic design, is of so little consequence that any of the specialists calling themselves "professional" engineers, would be permitted to practice architecture without let or hindrance.

This is retrogression. It cannot be possible that the lawmakers of Illinois will knowingly take this step. It behooves the architects to be watchful.

Three dominant architectural excitements center at the moment in Washington, D. C. They are projects, first, to erect to Thomas Jefferson a memorial; second, to rebuild the east portico of the Capitol; and third, to accept Andrew Mellon's national gallery.

Following the action of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission on February 18, in adopting the design submitted by John Russell Pope for a \$3,000,000 memorial to be located on the Tidal Basin facing the White House, a number of organizations including the designers of "Shelter in America," the staff of the School of Architecture, Columbia University, the League for Progress in Architecture and the Society of American Sculptors, have written lengthy letters of protest in opposition to the carrying out of Mr. Pope's design and also insisting that an open competition for the design be held.

One claims that the Pope design does not voice the idealism of Thomas Jefferson; that it is contrary to the idea of living American culture; that the aforesaid design might serve for a king's mausoleum but not to commemorate the life and work of America's premier democrat. The Columbia professors insist upon a nationwide competition or a series of competitions. They believe that the selected design, if built, would be a lamentable misfit both in time and place. The League for Progress in Architecture says it would make America ridiculous before other nations where architecture is a serious contemporary art, not an exercise in archaeology. And more than all these, the Society of American Sculptors accuses the memorial commission of betraying the artistic integrity of our people and of desecrating the memory of Thomas Jefferson by erecting a monument that they say is a mockery of the truth. They, too, want a national competition open to architects and sculptors. The protestants all seem to be in New York City or members of a New York Society. The rest of the country does not seem to have been heard from.

When Thomas U. Walter designed and had erected the cast iron dome which crowns the nation's Capitol, its base was apparently a little wider than it should have been to come symmetrically within the lines intended. It projects slightly over the east portico. Not that the critics have found any fault with this; in truth, very few have ever noticed it, for it is apparent only, and then not seriously, from one point of view. But somebody wants a job, so it is proposed to pull down and rebuild the east front with greater projection in order that perfect symmetry may be obtained from every angle. Three eastern chapters of the A. I. A. have already protested the change. If the proponents of the new portico had the Leaning Tower of Pisa to deal with, that extraordinary structure would have been razed long ago.

Andrew Mellon's gift of his great collection of paintings and a building to house them in Washington, D. C. is attacked in the Halls of Congress by Representative Maury Maverick of Texas in the amendments he suggested to the recently passed bill accepting the Mellon gift. Maverick says, "We may find this a Trojan horse, with its belly full of the wrong kind of soldiers and the wrong kind of generals. The Board as stipulated in the Bill would be perpetually Mellonized, and the expenses perpetually publicized." The bill says "no works shall be exhibited unless they are of similar high standard of quality as those of the donor." The Congressman proposes that the bill be amended to include the appointment of a majority of board members without consent of the donor.

We await voices from parts of the country other than the Atlantic seaboard on the Jefferson Memorial.

To tinker with the Capitol because of the slight eccentricity in the placement of the dome would mark American architectural judgment foolish. Are not architectural monuments a story of the culture and judgment of the time of their erection?

And on the Mellon Museum matter, it were best to withhold judgment.

Skylights are being made in Italy of two layers of glass with a layer of glass wool between, to keep out heat from the sun.

The world appears to be made up of just two kinds of people—yes-men and no-men, with a small sprinkling of habitual hedgers.



## April and May Illinois Society Meetings

To the April meeting on the 27th, came thirty members—enjoying the dinner, respectfully listening to the minutes, the routine business as presented by President Jensen and his concise reports on the State Building Code, which will be laid over for the next legislature to act upon; the “professional” engineers’ law; the proposed Chicago Building Code, on which the President reported progress; the report of Tirrell J. Ferrenz, who as representative of the Illinois Society of Architects, attended the convention of the Pennsylvania State Society earlier in April; and finally, the invitation by Secretary George Oakley Totten, Jr. of the American Section of the International Congress of Architects to be held in Paris July 19-25. Architects from all over the world are invited to attend this Congress and President Jensen will be glad to provide any Illinois Society member attending with credentials. A list of themes to be discussed may be obtained from Secretary McEldowney.

The program consisted of a dissertation by scientists on air pollution, primarily through the burning of soft coal. The first speaker was Dr. A. D. Singh of the Research Division, Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois, who had devoted the last two and one-half months to a study of Chicago air. The Chicago Smoke Prevention Bureau cooperated with him. This Bureau exists since 1887 and has been under civil service from the very beginning and is today, which permits advance without political interference.

Dr. Singh stated that in the anthracite regions of the East, less pollution of the air takes place since eastern hardcoal contains much less sulphur. It is the sulphur in the coal of the bituminous fields of the Middle West that causes much air pollution and deterioration of materials, to say nothing of the effect on health. He stated that Chicago’s skies were clearest during the Columbian Exposition of 1893 when special efforts were made by the city administration to present clear skies. In the recent study it was shown that the air having the greatest proportion of sulphur dioxide was found about railroad stations and roundhouses. The air in the stockyards, though subjected to pollution from many locomotives and power plants, nevertheless showed a surprising freedom from sulphur dioxide. This phenomenon was attributed by Dr. Singh to the fermentation of organic matter covering hundreds of animal pens.

Smoke from house boilers, particularly from apartment houses, has become progressively more offensive. In 1911 the pollution of atmosphere in residential districts was as 2½%, while in 1933 it registered as 43%.

The University will publish Dr. Singh’s report of the study of Chicago air in June.

I. A. Deutch, Combustion Engineer in the Smoke Inspection and Abatement Bureau, said that his contribution should rightfully be named a smoke inspector’s quandary. He told of complaints coming from different parts of the city to his Bureau; that the complaints against industrial plants today were not for smoking, but generally for invisible air pollution. The Bureau was alert to these complaints and made it its business to analyze such air and determine the deleterious components and where they originate. Imperfect combustion of oil issuing from a stack as mist and then settling as an oil film had been experienced; but through it all, sulphur dioxide from soft coal was pronounced the most damaging element for building materials.

Dr. R. D. Snow of the Research Foundation, Armour Institute of Technology, reported on his institution’s studies to mitigate sulphur and other elements from coal by various treatments of washing.

Harold Blackwell, very fluent with words and gestures, proposed the appointment of architects and engineers to an air pollution committee to cooperate with the Smoke Prevention Bureau of Chicago.

Frank A. Chambers, Chief of the City’s Smoke Bureau, stated that St. Louis enforces a city ordinance requiring coal washing where coal contains 2% or more of sulphur.

There were questions and answers which held the company together until after ten o’clock.

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Responding to the call for the May meeting of the Illinois Society of Architects on the 25th, were forty-eight men come to listen

and take part in discussions bearing on their profession and to absorb information on the harmony to be achieved in color juxtaposition, for the subject of the program was a discussion of the Munsell Chromatic System with special reference to color harmonies.

With near digestion of the dinner and secretary’s minutes accomplished, President Jensen started the new business by requesting Emery Stanford Hall to be the official representative of the Illinois Society at the annual meeting of state societies of architects in Boston on May 31. Mr. Hall said this could not be, since he was overloaded already with work at that and the larger A. I. A. Convention to follow.

President Jensen appointed nominating committees for officers of the Society for the ensuing year. He reported the new Chicago Building Code, not yet born, gathering new support among citizens’ organizations. The President also reported that on his appointment, Ernest L. Stouffer represented the I. S. A. at the Urbana meeting in the state university of the Illinois Manufacturers Association on May 20.

The President then introduced De Forest Sackett, Chairman of the Committee on Color Organization and Harmony of the Association for Color Research, organized one year ago. This association has set itself the problem of spreading information to commercial artists, color printers, chemists, weavers and others using color, on some chromatic system—and the system they have decided upon is the Munsell System.

Albert Munsell, born in 1857 in Boston and dying there in 1918, was a landscape painter and teacher in the art schools of Boston. He developed a system of color harmonies more easily understood by men other than physicists, for the physicist’s color scale and nomenclature is different than that of the artist using pigments. Mr. Sackett in his informal talk had many color charts with diagrams and equations to refer to. He told how the Munsell System is preserved for posterity through the publications of the Munsell Company founded to spread the inventor’s color notation, color system, and color atlas.

The system may be explained through a series of chapters. Chapter 1 lays down three dimensions of color: hue, value, and chroma. Chapter 2 treats the solid, a theoretical object constructed to visualize organized relationship of colors to each other. Chapter 3 discusses notation, and here the subdivision is hue notation, value notation, chroma notation, and complete notation.

To make clear what the speaker demonstrated it is necessary to have the charts before one. The old system of three primary and three secondary colors is abandoned. Munsell starts with a circle whose circumference is divided into ten equal parts. From the center, radial lines are drawn out from the circumference and these are divided into zones of hue and value and chroma. The formulae or methods of checking juxtaposition and blending were gone into. The speaker admitted that Munsell was often unscientific and that he had found some of the problems posed unworkable. But Munsell was the system exclusively adopted in America, even though the Oswald System, devised by a German scientist of the dye industry, was universally accepted in Europe. Oswald’s, he said, was a more scientific and provable system, but it was also more difficult to understand and apply.

Mr. White of the Cambridge Tile Manufacturing Company spoke, referring to a color tree and other color samples, exhibited in the room, as the result of the application by his concern of the Munsell System. Before its introduction in his company, they had had endless unorganized and unscientific colors to work with. Now, at least, they could find their way and everyone understood what color was referred to.

There were also exhibited in the room samples of Micarta material, manufactured by the Westinghouse Company for they too use the Munsell System of achieving color harmonies.

The surprise of the evening came when the President introduced Mr. Gale of the Mosaic Tile Company of Zanesville, Ohio. In 1932 Mr. Gale had been sent by his company to study color harmonies and how to achieve them at the Bauhaus at Dessau, Germany, founded by Walter Gropius, but in 1932 in charge of Mies van der Rohe. Here Mr. Gale spent four months on this problem. Schaeffer was the color man under whom he studied. There Gale learned the Oswald System and brought it back to this country where it is used by the Mosaic Tile Company.



## April and May Chapter Meetings

The attendance of thirty-four at the dinner was increased to forty-five at the program following, when on April 13 the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. met at the Architects Club of Chicago for its monthly meeting. Secretary's minutes and routine business disposed of, President Merrill called on E. Stanford Hall to report on the Chapter's status to the Glessner House deeded to the Chapter in 1924 and ready for delivery to the Chapter on the death of Mr. Glessner in January, 1936. Mr. Hall reported that it was necessary for the Chapter now to take over the property or release it, according to the Glessner Estate's attorney. Fact finding committees had determined that the Chapter without an endowment fund would be unable to handle the property. No assurance of an endowment was at hand and authority was asked of the Chapter for the Executive Committee to take definite action and, if necessary, surrender the deed to the estate. The Chapter voted the Executive Committee such authority.

Secretary Heimbrodt presented a communication advising the Chicago Chapter that the New York, Brooklyn and Philadelphia chapters had passed resolutions in opposition to a change in the exterior design of the U. S. Capitol by reason of the fact that the Walter dome did not center perfectly over the central east and west porticos. The matter had come up because of the proposal to destroy and rebuild with greater projection one of these porticos. The Chapter decided to take no active part in this discussion.

A resolution was put and carried authorizing the President to appoint a committee to cooperate with a like committee of the Illinois Society of Architects to guard the interests of architects in Illinois from usurpation by "professional" engineers as threatened in a bill prepared for presentation to the legislature at Springfield.

Dwight James Baum of the New York Chapter was an interested guest at this meeting. He spoke on the agitation for changing the portico of the U. S. Capitol and was in sympathy with his Chapter's resolution in opposition to change. He referred to the resolution just passed guarding against "professional" engineers' unreasonable desires, citing similar experiences in New York and encouraging the Chicago Chapter's opposition to the proponents' machinations. Finally he spoke on housing, a subject that for years had been close to his heart. He condemned publications that presented pictures and plans of houses with a fixed cost price given, disregarding where the house is built, and stated that architects had troubles enough without added misrepresentation by publications. Mr. Baum is the adviser for "Good Housekeeping" magazine on the presentation of building problems to lay readers and he is very careful to avoid misleading the public.

The President introduced Robert S. DeGolyer, F. A. I. A., of the Chicago Chapter who is the principal architect for the PWA Julia C. Lathrop Homes in Chicago located at Diversey Boulevard and the Chicago River. Mr. DeGolyer's thorough study of his problem makes him familiar with all its phases. He explained the reason for the government's abandonment of the earlier site selected between Division Street and North Avenue. Mr. DeGolyer's condensation of his address is printed on another page of this issue.

Col. F. Charles Starr, an active member of the Chicago Chapter until called to Washington to assume the position of Senior Construction Supervisor for housing projects of the PWA, was the next speaker. He first went into the problem of assembling land by the government for housing projects, not forgetting the legal obstructions so often thrown in the way by property owners by natural selfish interest. He took up the trials encountered in obtaining capable and willing labor to carry out these projects under the restrictions laid down by law regarding hours for men dependent upon government aid. He complained of the large numbers anxious to get the government money but unwilling to work for it. He thought the government would be better off to pay a dole and let these building projects proceed independent of those on the dole. He had visited many slum neighborhoods in different cities and found conditions deplorable and stated that one-third of the population live under disgraceful conditions. Government grants, he said, amounted to 45% of the cost. The PWA housing project in Milwaukee was well along toward completion and figures of cost to tenants had been determined. For shelter \$5.41; for utilities and accessories \$2.05. Total cost per room per month to tenant \$7.46.

Col. Starr had with him a draft of the Wagner Bill and read extracts from its contents without further comment, pleading that he had had insufficient time to study the bill. In conclusion he stated that he had made a visit to Greendale, Wisconsin, the suburban resettlement town being built under the Resettlement Division of the Department of Agriculture. He found it most interesting and promising though its standards were different and not comparable to the housing under PWA.

President Merrill who assumes duties in the Chicago territory for FHA, the government sector insuring private loans for building projects, spoke very briefly on that branch of public service.

The President now threw the meeting open for questions and answers. Mr. Hall asked Mr. DeGolyer what the cost of the Julia Lathrop buildings was now that most of them were under roof. The answer was: without utilities and landscaping, 49c per cu. ft.; with utilities and landscaping, 54c per cu. ft.

Earl H. Reed, heading the Northern Illinois Division of HABS, announced that a limited number of portfolios of Part II of the Survey's work are for sale at \$6.50 per set.

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The May 11 meeting of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A. opened as usual with a good dinner, followed by Secretary Heimbrodt's minutes and accumulated business. Chairman Earl H. Reed of the Membership Committee reported activity in the matter of canvassing eligible material for new membership. The Secretary read from the new blanks giving all the requirements necessary for qualification. Erwin Baur was introduced as one new member.

President Merrill spoke of delegates to the forthcoming Boston Convention and stated that the number was still in doubt, pending agreement between the Washington office and the Chapter's Secretary on the number of Chapter members in good standing.

The program had for its title "Architectural Service for Small House Construction," with Gail Sullivan, FHA Director for Northern Illinois, and Earl H. Reed of FHLB, as speakers. In introducing Mr. Sullivan, President Merrill, en passant, mentioned Mr. Sullivan's extraordinary salesmanship. This talent became very evident as Mr. Sullivan proceeded with his talk—a talk containing nothing new to the listeners—but which he presented in such a convincing, flowing manner as to hold the architects interested. He pronounced the architects as the most voiceless of all the groups interested in building new homes. If FHA had achieved nothing beyond the introduction and standardization of amortization of the mortgage obligation with the giving of a loan, the effort would have been well worth while. He quoted Marriner Eccles as saying that the building industry in this country was the most backward of all, considering the numberless, disgraceful hovels permitted to exist throughout the country and be used for housing human beings.

Mr. Reed presented the case of his group of architects working through the Federal Home Loan Bank. Their accomplishments compared to FHA were small, their start late; but there was progress to report, and locally connections had been made with a bank in Hinsdale and another in Wilmette.

Secretary Heimbrodt followed with a statement of the operations of the Small House Service Bureau, which since the withdrawal of the blessing given the Bureau by the A. I. A., had marketed its plans, not through lumber dealers as of yore, but solely through architects.

The French government is restoring the famous ruins of Baalbek in Syria, bringing more of the temple walls and columns out of ancient wreckage.

## Contributors to this Issue

Robert S. DeGolyer, Chicago architect, I. S. A., F. A. I. A., is responsible for a number of Chicago's prominent vertical apartment buildings erected before the crash. He is the principal architect on the Chicago PWA housing project known as Julia C. Lathrop Homes.

Louis La Beaume, distinguished St. Louis architect, Vice-President A. I. A., member I. S. A., is a recognized writer on architecture.



## Architects, Beware!

In March of this year, the attention of the Legislative Committee was called to House Bill No. 297 presented to the Illinois State Legislature by Representative Arthur M. Kaindl. This bill is "An Act to revise the law in relation to the regulation of the practice of structural engineering." In substance, it is an act creating the licensing of professional engineers.

The bill as presented is quite loosely drawn and, due to its generalities, if passed, would seriously affect architects.

Professional engineers are defined "as persons who, by reason of their knowledge of mathematics, physical sciences, and the principles of engineering acquired by professional education and practical experience, are qualified to engage in engineering practices hereinafter defined."

Engineering practice is defined "as any professional service for hire, such as consultation, investigation, formulation, planning, designing, for the responsible supervision of the construction in connection with any public or privately-owned public utilities, structures, buildings, machines, equipment, process work or projects wherein the public welfare or the safeguarding of life, public health or property is concerned or involved, when such professional service for hire requires the application of engineering principles and data."

The bill excludes a professional engineer from the provisions of the Act relating to the regulations of the practice of architecture. In other words, professional engineers are permitted to practice all phases of architecture.

An endeavor was made to distinguish slightly between structural engineers and other professional engineers, but this differentiation is quite ambiguous. Only "locomotive, stationary and marine engineers, or power plant engineers for manufacturers who supervise the operation of or operate machinery of equipment, or who supervise construction within their own plants" are free of the provision of this act.

According to this newly drawn act, the following persons are considered qualified to receive certificates of registration as professional engineers:

Those who, within ten years preceding application, have practiced professional engineering in this state or another state, or in a foreign country, for not less than six years, during at least two of which years he has been in responsible charge of professional engineering work as a principal or an assistant;

Or, those who, within ten years preceding application for registration, have pursued a course of study and training in the theory and practice of professional engineering for a period of not less than six years, in the employ of or under the immediate personal supervision of one or more practicing professional engineers, during at least two years of which they have been in charge of work in designing or construction in the employ of or under the immediate personal supervision of a practicing professional engineer;

Or, those who have passed an examination.

At any time within six months after the passage of this Act, any professional engineer submitting evidence that he has been a resident of the state for one year preceding the date of application and was practicing or had a previous practice in professional engineering, would be qualified for registration. *In other words, briefly, anyone who termed himself a professional engineer in any one of its manifold groups, such as structural, mechanical, heating, plumbing, sanitary, ventilating, air conditioning, refrigeration, electrical, mining, metallurgical or chemical engineering, would be qualified without examination and without proving qualifications beyond his own immediate field. Further, the entire building industry, including architects, would be required to employ the services of professional engineers for any and all types of projects.*

The original bill was drafted by Jacob A. Harman, a structural engineer of Peoria, Illinois, and is sponsored by the Western Society of Engineers, the various Illinois groups of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the American Association of Engineers.

Opposed to it are not only the architects but also the Illinois Society of Structural Engineers, the Building Construction Employers' Association, the Chicago Building Managers' Association, and the Chicago Building Trades Council, which latter organizations see in this bill a danger that all construction, alteration or repair

work will be required to be under the guidance and supervision of professional engineers. Also opposed are the National Association of Power Engineers and various other labor organizations.

A committee was formed of representatives of those groups opposed to this bill, consisting of O. W. Rosenthal, representing the general contractors, Ray Berry, representing the heating contractors, H. P. Reger, representing the plumbing contractors, George M. Tobey, representing the Building Managers' Association, Walter Schaeffer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, representing labor, and Paul Gerhardt, Jr., appointed as Chairman, representing the Illinois Society of Architects and the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A.

As a result of numerous meetings of this committee, together with meetings with Representative Kaindl and Representative Powers, Chairman of the Committee on License and Miscellany, it was deemed advisable, after having the Legislative Committee hearing postponed from April 15 to May 11, to appear at Springfield on this latter date to voice our dissatisfaction with the bill as drawn.

Leo H. Pleins of Springfield, one of our members, represented the architects at this meeting of the Legislative Committee on Tuesday, May 11, at the State Capitol, and reports that a large representation of labor was present and strongly opposed the bill. As a result of this concerted opposition, a sub-committee of Legislators was appointed, to meet in Chicago in an endeavor to amend the bill in a manner acceptable to all.

It is the attitude of the Committee on Legislation of the Illinois Society of Architects that it is proper for professional engineers to receive official recognition and registration in the particular field or fields in which they prove themselves to be qualified, but it is not proper that all work of any nature whatever in that particular field be required to be under the guidance and supervision of professional engineers. It is felt that an acceptable bill can be written in this respect.

—Paul Gerhardt, Jr., Chairman, Legislative Committee, I. S. A.

## Take This to Heart

The purpose of inquiries sent out by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards with reference to applicants for reciprocal transfer of registration credit from one state to another is to establish professional standing in the community where the applicant lives and practices his profession. It is intended to accomplish two main purposes: first, to make up a good record in a way that it may be tangibly presented; and second, to prevent those practitioners who have dissipated their standing in their home communities from going to other communities and imposing on them.

Architectural societies and individuals should recognize that it is of the utmost importance to the interests of the profession that real competency shall be promoted and incompetency and dishonesty discouraged.

Standing in a profession is rated by the way in which a man is regarded by his professional compeers. High regard may be evidenced by direct testimony, by election to important posts, by honors conferred, or by election to membership in professional societies. Unfavorable regard may be evidenced by expulsion from societies, refusal to elect to societies, honors denied, or by direct testimony.

Professional contacts are necessary to well-rounded professional equipment. The man who neglects or refuses to identify himself with the established societies of his profession is open to the imputation of being afraid to meet his equals on common ground. Such men are very likely to be behind the times in the knowledge of current practice. The same imputation applies if they do not follow with care the material presented by the professional press.

In answering inquiries, the secretary of a society can help the registration boards to estimate an architect's standing.

—National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

Concrete lumber is now being used for fireproof construction, reports Oliver Bowles of the U. S. Bureau of Mines. One-inch boards are coated with firmly-bonded concrete. It is used for ceilings, floors, roofs and partitions. When applied to a steel frame, a fireproof frame house may be built.



## Big Top Rhythms

Louis La Beaume Reviews Irving K. Pond's New Book

Curiosity is, after all, man's saving grace; though the same trait in woman is sometimes uncomfortable. It is, however, at its best a masculine virtue and is perhaps the motivating force behind those evolutionary processes which have caused us to shed our scales, our tails and finally our whiskers. Curiosity has led men across unfathomed seas to discover uncharted continents; it has impelled men to endure physical hunger and thirst in order to satisfy a greater hunger of the spirit. It has lured men into strange lands and places where strange beings dwell. It is the mainspring of man's intellectual processes, and so we are apt to think of it as a quality of the mind only, rather than a physical quality as well. But the author of "Big Top Rhythms" (Willett, Clark and Co., Publishers) has, through a long life, been not only curious with his mind, but curious with his body. His mental and physical curiosity have kept him young; and though he is more than six feet tall, and a decade beyond the allotted span of three score years and ten, he has never really grown up.

He is as keen today about the man on the flying trapeze as we youngsters used to be when we were youngsters. And he, himself, flew through the air with the greatest of ease until just a few weeks before sitdown strikes became fashionable.

Many books have been written about the circus, for the very word suggests, and always will suggest, the glamour which surrounds deeds of daring, skill and mystery. The gladiatorial combats, the chariot races and the efforts of man to pit his mental and physical prowess against the savage beast filled the Roman arenas to overflowing centuries ago. The sight and smell of blood excited the populace then as the sight of billowing canvas and pink lemonade, and the smell of roasting peanuts and popcorn excites us today.

Our author would hotly resent any implication that the circus has degenerated. He would and does defend it as a spectacle appealing to our primal and universal consciousness. The circus today piques and appeases, if it does not always satisfy, our human curiosity.

This is no book of mere reminiscences, nor a nostalgic effort to recapture the thrills which made our hearts beat faster when our hearts were young. Here the author is not primarily concerned with those miracles of nature, like the fat woman or the human skeleton, the two-headed boy or the beautiful mermaid, half fish and half, however disconcerting, seductive maidenhood. NO. By him the wonderful works of nature, the multitudinous and variegated contents of the Ark are accepted without comment. This is a book about Art. Throughout all of his long life I. K. Pond has thrilled to the manifestations of art; seeking in his own field of architecture those rhythms, those precisions of nuance, that sense of balance and timing (proportion) which are the very essence of great architecture. No wonder then that his inquiring mind has recognized the kinship between the art of the acrobat, the aerialist, the tumbler and the juggler with the art of the architect. The rhythms of the human body are the very rhythms of the universe.

"Let us", he says "enjoy from within the ecstasy of creation; feel the systems detach themselves from the central incandescent mass and swing off into space; watch planets detach themselves from suns and find their orbits; watch what has been called chaos become order; . . . feel what we call spirit issue from this striving and conflict, from this struggle toward co-ordination and correlation—this spirit which recognizes the difference between conflict and cooperation, between what is expedient, and what is suicidal."

May his brother architects not ponder well these words? Again let me quote: "Poetry marks the spirit in which a thing is conceived; art marks the manner of its doing. The art which claims our special attention lies in an innate and genuine love for the poetry of motion." These words indicate the approach of Mr. Pond to his subject, and recall to me the words of another inquiring Spirit whose curiosity has kept him forever young.

Havelock Ellis has written in that beautiful and suggestive book "The Dance of Life" that "Dancing and building are the two primary and essential arts. The art of dancing (acrobatics?)

stands at the source of all the arts that express themselves first in the human person. The art of building or architecture is the beginning of all the arts that lie outside the person; and in the end they unite . . . There is no primary art outside these two arts, for their origin is far earlier than man himself, and dancing came first."

And now let us quote Mr. Pond again. "The infant lies upon his back gesticulating with arms and legs, grasping everything within reach of his fingers and toes. He is consciously alive. When he creeps and stands he is more than merely alive; he is a being with a will and with a spirit which glories in a newfound sense of self. The will asserts itself in running, jumping, romping, dancing, those movements which respond to feelings of joy in exuberance of spirit and rich vitality." The writer subdivides the field of bodily activities into athletics, "the prose of motion in which a victory through personal contest is the end sought"; and acrobatics, those exhibitions of skill and daring the end of which is mastery over self inspired by the purest sense of beauty in the performer. "In this art of acrobatics the feeling for rhythm is as vital as in poetry, the sense of time as basic as in music."

"Were I a master of this art I should know that my body was not common clay,—a clod, but a beautiful sensate instrument, a confluence of complex cosmic forces, which should leap and bound and swing and sway and swoon at my will, in the play of my emotions."

The meaning of this book emerges in passages such as these. We share the author's ecstasy, and follow him in his enthusiasm for the courage, the discipline and precision of those troupers who have created for us patterns of beauty in the ambient air under the Big Top. And so we begin to feel the essential kinship of all rhythmic art, and a renewed respect for all its finest manifestations.

There have been many attempts to define art, and many to *confine* it! But the author's definition as "the expression in terms of beauty of a reconciliation to the struggle of life" will serve as well as any. "In architecture the struggle has to do with the interrelationships of structural stresses and strains acting through inert matter made vital through the operation of the human spirit. In acrobatics the struggle has to do with bodily stresses and strains producing beautiful patterns through the play of the inhering spirit upon mind and vitalized matter."

So after all perhaps this is not merely another book about the circus. It is a book about Art and therefore in its sincerity a book about life. It is the effort of a wise and observant man nearing the end of a rich and fruitful career to express his reconciliation to the struggle of life.

Throughout an active career as an adventurous and creative architect he has fraternized with circus folk who know him as a fellow artist. And now he takes us by the hand and leads us under the Big Top to share his delight in and his understanding of its marvels. The round-off, the flip, the somersault, the twister, the criss-cross, and the kaleidoscopic combinations of these entrance us again as they did long, long ago.

The ring master cracks his whip and we see again a creamy steed with broad bare back loping around the ring, unperturbed as the World's Greatest Champion Bareback Somersault Rider describes his beautiful arcs and lands miraculously on the equine haunches.

We see Leitzel, that queen of all aerialists, performing her graceful and breath-taking miracles with the Flying Codonas. And Maurice Colleano doing a roundoff, a flip, another flip and a double back somersault to his feet. Then a company of Arabs whose sense of pattern we are told is different, doing their turns backward or from the bottom of the page up, and with a kind of interrupted rhythm. We are introduced to many of them in the back yard, see them at rehearsal, and begin to understand the painful effort necessary to achieve perfection.

How are these rhythms which we accept as natural and inevitable composed and consummated? Have they their genesis in the mind alone, or are they born of some esthetic consciousness



in the body? No matter. The artist must "feel" in all his fibre and his mind must dominate the execution of his ideal. Here we are witnessing an art that brooks no bungling, no slovenliness. Each flight and completed circle must be as perfect as a Grecian urn, each stance as flawless as the Doric shafts of the Parthenon.

It is not mere coincidence that this book flows from the pen of an accomplished architect, who calls himself a "circus fan." Perhaps because of his enthusiasm and his earnest purpose to communicate it, certain chapters may appear somewhat diffuse and not quite as crisp as the "turns" which they describe. But if all artists would "tumble" to the deeper implications of Mr. Pond's thesis, much of our present day confusion about Art might be blown away. And order might arise once more out of chaos.

—Louis La Beaume.

## Plym Traveling Fellow Reports

In my travels through England, Norway and Sweden I found the architectural profession very busy. In fact, in Stockholm I was offered a job through the American Consulate and their connections. These governments first helped the building trades which today have recovered almost to normal. Of course, government influence—money and projects—still composes the greater part of this recovery.

In Oslo I met Architect Larsen, Secretary of the Norwegian Association. He was very kind in driving me about Oslo, showing me especially the modern housing projects. In this type of architecture, the capital of Norway can show a development since the turn of the century from the early attempts with the steep roofs to the ultra-modern international type of flat roofs and blank walls pierced by window openings. The architects are tremendously influenced by Gropius and Le Corbusier. Many of them have studied in Germany. Functionalism reigns. Nationalism and tradition—and there is a little of the latter—are not considered. Flat roofs, claims Mr. Larsen, are more functional in that they prevent the snows in the spring from falling on the pedestrians in the streets.

In Stockholm, the atmosphere was much different. Sweden boasts of a tradition that has healthfully inspired its modern architecture. A hundred years of peace in the country have laid a foundation on which rests today a Swedish architecture to which everyone looks with respect and joy. Its exponents are Östberg and the Town Hall, Tengbom and his Concert Hall and Hogalids-kirkan, Wahlmann and the Engelbrektskirkan, and Westman and the Court House. Tradition and nationalism have been regarded with the highest respect, yet have not become a dogma.

Stockholm can also boast of many new housing projects. As in Norway, these are not slum clearance. In my wanderings I found practically no slums, but definite attempts to house the rapidly growing city. Everywhere there seems to be a shortage of apartments. In Oslo a family has to invest sometimes as much as 10,000 kronen (\$2000.00) in a building association before it can even rent an apartment in one of these enterprises. But even in Sweden these apartments are small and below the American standard.

I met Engineer-Architect Cederström, the exponent of vertical education and study. Mr. Cederström is the head of the Stockholm Stads Sjnkhudirektion, an association incorporated by the government to develop Stockholm's modern hospital system. In Mr. Cederström's opinion, architects should be incorporated by the state and be responsible only to the state. Moneys for the preliminary investigation, as in his case the hospital, should be paid by the state since an individual has not the resources for thorough investigation. In other words, architecture should be organized into businesses such as the motor, automobile, electric, and steel industries. An architect should become a member of an architectural organization, which deals with one problem and only one. His life study should be dedicated to the solution of one problem. I wondered how long I would have to starve if I, as a young architect, had selected as my life problem the hospital, when under the conditions prevailing during the last few years, hospital architects were not in demand.

—Eugene F. Stoyke.

Surveying the state of Kentucky, archaeologists have in recent years recorded 688 Indian mounds, 162 ancient village sites, 170 cemeteries, 108 rock shelters, and 57 caves.

## Plym Fellowship Award Made

Professor L. H. Provine, Secretary, Plym Committee, announces the award of the 1936-1937 Fellowship to Harris A. Kemp, B. S. and M. S. in Architecture, 1934-1935, at the University of Illinois. The subject of the competition was a City Music Garden.

Mr. Kemp was born in Kewanee, Illinois, attending grammar and high schools there before entering the University of Illinois. He gained some practical experience with Berger & Kelley, architects, of Champaign, Illinois, followed by service with the Texas Centennial Architects Associated at Dallas and then came experience with W. Scott Dunne, a specialist in motion picture houses. Since September, 1936, Mr. Kemp has been at Massachusetts Institute of Technology with another degree as his goal.

Professor A. E. Speiser, unearthing ruins of the "world's oldest city" at Tepe Gawra in Mesopotamia—a more than 6000 year old city of the stone age—finds that in that age people built an acropolis, with awe-inspiring temples around a court and dwellings on the remaining side of the enclosure. These Tepe Gawra ruins he holds to be the earliest known example of monumental architecture. The expedition is a joint project of the American School of Oriental Research, University of Pennsylvania, and Dropsie College.

## Illinois State Employment Service

Illinois State Employment Service is functioning effectively in Chicago, as no doubt it is elsewhere in the State, in the interest of both employee and employer. It is supported by state funds and is affiliated with United States Employment Service. No fee is charged either employer or employee. The organization functions free of all political influence. Architectural and engineering employment service have their place in this organization as have all other skilled trades and professions.

The Chicago office, presided over by Olin W. Dibble, Manager, is at 5 North Wabash Avenue.

## Live at the Architects Club

A few attractive rooms are available at The Architects Club of Chicago, 1801 Prairie Avenue, for young men in the building industry. They are offered at inviting rentals and, coupled with the environment and advantages of the Club, should make a most desirable home for young men, especially those interested in the building industry or in architecture. For appointment call Frederick W. Maynard, Chairman of the House Committee, at Calumet 7454.

## Fine Architectural Postcards

Samuel Chamberlain, famous American lithographer and etcher of architectural subjects, offers superior photographic postcards in series covering: Yale University; Connecticut; Boston; Plymouth; one set for Concord, Lexington and Cambridge; Provincetown; and New York City. All sets, comprising 390 cards, are sold for \$10. Address: The American Scene, Marblehead, Mass.

Robert Carl Berlin, architect, of Chicago, died in Highland Park, Illinois, on April 17, aged 84. Mr. Berlin was born at Granville, Illinois on February 11, 1853. He studied architecture under the great Gottfried Semper, who had designed the Dresden Opera House, at the Polytechnikum at Zurich, Switzerland, receiving his diploma in 1877. In the same year he entered the practice of architecture in Chicago under the firm name of Schaub and Berlin. Later for years he practiced alone. Since 1919 his firm has been Berlin and Swern.

Among his outstanding works may be mentioned Wieboldt Stores in Chicago; the Y. M. C. A. Hotel, Wabash Ave., Chicago; hospitals in different cities; McCormick Y. W. C. A., Chicago; eleven Y. M. C. A. buildings.

Mr. Berlin was a founder member of the Illinois Society of Architects, then known as Chicago Architects Business Association. A fellow of the A. I. A., he was always identified with the Chicago Chapter.